

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior revisions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1~20. (*Cancelled*)

21. (*Currently amended*) A search service system comprising:

at least one memory having program instructions and databases, the databases including:

a category classification database including at least one classification record, the classification record including a representative category associated with a predetermined keyword group, the predetermined keyword group including a representative keyword and other keywords associated with the representative keyword;

a keyword database including a predetermined keyword group and data indicative of a number of searches made using a representative keyword or other keywords associated with the representative keyword, the representative keyword representing the other keywords associated with the representative keyword, which convey a same or similar meaning;

means for receiving a selection of a representative category associated with a predetermined keyword group from a manager;

means for updating the received representative category associated with the predetermined keyword group in the classification record by associating the received representative category with a different predetermined keyword group;

means for receiving a search request keyword from a user through a communication network, the search request including a keyword;

means for searching the category classification database for a representative category associated with a first keyword group, the first keyword group including the received keyword, the means for searching the category classification database determining at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category;

means for searching the keyword database for the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category and data indicative of a number of searches made using a representative keyword or other keywords associated with each keyword group of the at least one keyword group, the at least one keyword group including the first keyword group;

means for providing the user with information showing popularity of the ~~searched~~ keyword included in the search request based, at least in part, upon the data indicative of the number of searches made using the representative keyword or other keywords associated with the first keyword group; and

means for updating the data indicative of the number of searches made using the representative keyword or other keywords associated with the first keyword group in response to the search request from ~~requested by~~ the user.

22. *(Previously presented)* The system of claim 21, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows popularity ranks of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

23. *(Previously presented)* The system of claim 21, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows a portion of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category based upon the popularity of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

24. *(Previously presented)* The system of claim 21, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows changes in the popularity of the searched keyword in association with the other keywords of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

25-29. *(Canceled)*

30. *(Currently amended)* A search service method comprising the steps of:

maintaining at least one classification record in a category classification database, wherein the classification record comprises a representative category associated with a predetermined keyword group and ~~a general category associated with the representative category~~, the predetermined keyword group including ~~comprises~~ a representative keyword and other keywords associated with the representative keyword;

upon receipt of instructions from a manager, associating a first representative category with a different representative keyword in a different predetermined keyword group;

maintaining at least one predetermined keyword group and data indicative of a number of searches made using a representative keyword or other keywords associated with the

representative keyword, in a keyword database, the representative keyword representing the other keywords associated with the representative keyword, which convey a same or similar meaning;

receiving a search request a keyword from a user through a communication network, the search request including a keyword;

searching the category classification database for a representative category associated with a first keyword group, the first keyword group including the received keyword;

searching the keyword database for at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category and data indicative of a number of searches made using a representative keyword or other keywords associated with each keyword group of the at least one keyword group, the at least one keyword group including the first keyword group;

providing the user with information showing popularity of the ~~searched~~ keyword included in the search request based, at least in part, upon the data indicative of the number of searches made using the representative keyword or other keywords associated with the first keyword group; and

updating the data indicative of the number of searches made using the representative keyword or other keywords associated with the first keyword group in response to the search request from ~~requested by~~ the user.

31. (*Previously presented*) The method of claim 30, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows popularity ranks of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

32. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 30, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows a portion of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category based upon the popularity of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

33. *(Previously presented)* The system of claim 30, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows changes in the popularity of the searched keyword in association with the other keywords of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

34. *(Canceled)*

35. *(Currently amended)* A computer readable record medium recording a program for implementing a search service method comprising the steps of:

maintaining at least one classification record in a category classification database, wherein the classification record comprises a representative category associated with a predetermined keyword group and a general category associated with the representative category, the predetermined keyword group including comprises a representative keyword and other keywords associated the representative keyword;

upon receipt of instructions from a manager, associating a first representative category with a different representative keyword in a different predetermined keyword group;

maintaining at least one predetermined keyword group and data indicative of a number of searches made using a representative keyword or other keywords associated with the representative keyword, in a keyword database, the representative keyword representing the other keywords associated with the representative keyword, which convey a same or similar meaning;

receiving a search request keyword from a user through a communication network, the search request including a keyword;

searching the category classification database for a representative category associated with a first keyword group, the first keyword group including the received keyword;

searching the keyword database for at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category and data indicative of a number of searches made using a representative keyword or other keywords associated with each keyword group of the at least one keyword group, the at least one keyword group including the first keyword group;

providing the user with information showing popularity of the ~~searched~~ keyword included in the search request based, at least in part, upon the data indicative of the number of searches made using the representative keyword or other keywords associated with the first keyword group; and

updating the data indicative of the number of searches made using the representative keyword or other keywords associated with the first keyword group in response to the search request from ~~requested by~~ the user.

36. *(Previously presented)* The computer readable record medium of claim 35, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows popularity ranks of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

37. *(Previously presented)* The computer readable record medium of claim 35, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows a portion of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category based upon the popularity of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

38. *(Canceled)*